



**FULBRIGHT**  
South Africa  
CREATING OPPORTUNITY



# FULBRIGHT FOREIGN STUDENT PROGRAM 2023-2024

**Application deadline: May 01, 2022**

**Application link: <https://apply.iie.org/ffsp2023>**

Applications open on January 21, 2022 and will close on May 01, 2022. Please read through the information in this document carefully before starting your application. You will have approximately 14 weeks to complete your online application and will not be able to access the application for editing once it has been submitted. Prior to submission, open applications can be saved and updated as information (such as transcripts or certificates) become available.

## Eligibility

- Be a South African citizen **OR** a permanent resident with a minimum of 5 years of permanent residency status in South Africa (Please note: S.A. nationals with dual citizenship from the U.S. are not eligible for the program)
- Have one of the following academic degrees:
  - For PhD research (Visiting Student Researcher): Be registered for a PhD at a South African university, to participate in an academic year in the U.S. to conduct research related to your studies. You should still be registered with a South African University as a PhD student at the time that you will commence your research in the U.S. (August 2023). Current NRF funded PhD students are encouraged to apply.
  - When applying for a Master's degree: a 4-year Bachelor's degree, BTech degree or a 3-year Bachelor's degree **with** an Honors degree
  - When applying for a Doctorate degree: a Master's degree
- All Applicants should:
  - Have sufficient level of English proficiency to enable them to engage in graduate level study in the U.S.
  - Be able to meet the minimum scores on required standardized tests such as the GRE and TOEFL (Fulbright will provide semi-finalists with vouchers to complete these tests when invited to the semi-final round)
  - Display academic excellence

- Be highly motivated and committed to returning to S.A. after the program
- Demonstrate leadership qualities
- Display a sense of social responsibility; be involved in extra-mural activities
- Have a desire to further Fulbright Alumni activities by giving back to your community/university upon returning
- Have an understanding of the cross-cultural sensitivity and flexibility needed to adjust successfully to life in the United States as a student.
- Preference will be given to applicants who:
  - Have not had recent and extensive experience in the U.S.
  - Have not held a Fulbright Scholarship before
- Students already studying in the United States are NOT eligible
- MBA and studies that require patient contact (human or animal) are excluded

## Selection Process and Timeline

- After the initial review of all the applications and interview of shortlisted applicants by the Fulbright Selection Committee, potential candidates will participate in a semi-final round selection process before a final cohort is nominated and submitted to the Fulbright Foreign Services Board for further review.
- A nomination by the South African Fulbright Selection Committee does not guarantee your placement at a U.S. university. Final placement at a U.S. university will be determined by the Institute of International Education (IIE).
- Shortlisted candidates will be contacted for interviews by May 31, 2022, and must be available to:
  - Participate in an interview (could also be online): June 2022
  - Attend a half-day general workshop (once invited to advance to the next round): June/July 2022
  - Attend a 2-day GRE preparation workshop (once invited to advance to the next round): June/July 2022

Failure to attend these sessions will render you ineligible for the Fulbright Program.

- Final nominees, successfully placed at a U.S. university, will depart for the United States in July/August 2023.
- **Interviews:** All applicants must download the “Interview Location Page” at the end of this document, mark their preferred interview location, and upload the page with their application. Note that you should select the area that is geographically closest to your usual daily activities, as applications are assigned to your nearest Consulate or Embassy for review. You will be responsible for travel and other related expenses, although interviews may be conducted online.
- Prospective Fulbright participants should be aware that public health conditions, availability of consular services and travel, as well as U.S. institutional operating status and policies may affect their ability to travel to the U.S. and participate in academic programs.

## APPLICATION GUIDELINES

### Academic Materials

Upload copies of ALL post high school transcripts, including latest transcripts for current studies. An uploaded transcript has to include 3 components:

- Your transcript/s
- Your graduation certificate/s
- An explanation sheet on the grading system used by your university (usually found at the back of your transcripts)  
Please note: All 3 components have to be uploaded for each degree completed to date. Scan your transcripts, certificates and explanation sheet into one file before you upload them to the application system. Final selected applicants will be asked to hand in an original transcript and a certified copy of the certificate for each degree completed. These documents will be sent to the U.S. universities for verification of completion of the degrees.
- Transcripts and certificates must be in English
- Upload as .pdf files using the file naming protocol Surname\_Firstname\_Document type (e.g. Smith\_Susan\_Transcript BSc).

### Test Scores

GRE and TOEFL test scores are not required at this stage. If you have completed any of the required tests on your own before applying, you may upload with your application.

### Academic and Professional information

#### Awards and Recognition:

All current and previous awards and achievements should be mentioned. Current NRF funded PhD students applying in the VSR category, should also include mention of their NRF funding.

### Study Plan

For which degree objective are you applying:

- Visiting Student Researcher: South African PhD student going to the U.S. to do research (no course work)
- Master's
- Doctorate (PhD)

**Intended grant period:** VSR (PhD research) 9 months, Master's 2 years; PhD 4 years;

#### Study/Research Objectives:

This is an extremely important part of your application. It is the essence of why you want to study in the United States. It must be clearly written and outline the following:

- Be specific about your major field and specialized interests within this field.
- Explain why you are interested in this area.

- Describe the kind of program you expect to undertake
  - How does this fit into your educational background?
  - How does this fit into your future objectives and goals?
- How are your research interests relevant to current trends/challenges in your home country?
- How will you apply your studies upon returning to your home country?
- Reason the academic objective should be achieved in the U.S.
- How study in the U.S. will enhance your knowledge, skills and understanding in your field of study and future career goals.

**TIP: First formulate in a word document then upload to the application.**

### **Applied U.S. Universities:**

Note that you should not directly apply to any U.S. Universities in anticipation of a Fulbright grant. If you have already applied to U.S. Universities at the time of your Fulbright application, please share the relevant information to avoid duplicating applications, which may result in confusion at U.S. Universities should you be selected as a Fulbright recipient.

### **Personal Statement:**

This is a narrative statement describing how you have achieved your current goals. It is an opportunity to 'interview on paper'. What you do not tell us about yourself, we will never know. Promote your accomplishments but be concise.

The most important part of any university or scholarship application is the personal statement. A strong personal statement can set you apart from other applicants and give you a chance to explain how you meet the selection criteria.

Faculty members and scholarship selection committees want to know as much as they can about each applicant. Admissions exam scores, university degree results and letters of reference are all important indicators of an applicant's academic potential. However, this information does not reveal much about the student's character, motivation, future academic or career goals or why the applicant is interested in that particular study field. The personal statement exists to allow applicants to convey something personal about themselves, and to convince the selection committee that the applicant is an especially attractive candidate.

Guidelines on writing a Personal Statement for Fulbright applications:

- Our best tip is for you to stop and think before you put pen to paper – do you know what your short and longer-term goals are? Are you convinced that this program will help you fulfil these? It will be hard to convince a university if you don't believe so yourself! Have you done enough research into selecting suitable university programs? Or researching the scholarship program? Are you convinced they are a good fit for you? Do you know what the admissions or selection criteria are? Is your CV updated?
- After you have all of this necessary information for writing a personal statement, we encourage you to have a rigorous brainstorming session. Think about your personal statement as a marketing tool. You want to convey all of your strengths, as they relate to the prompt provided and/or the selection criteria. We recommend making a list of the criteria and assigning 1-2 examples of how you have demonstrated these. Think of these as your talking points. Like a politician, no matter what you are asked in the personal statement or essay prompts you will try to address these in your application package. Cross off those that

will be covered in other areas of your application. Arrange them into three themes: why me, why here and why now:

- Why me: Connect the dots between your CV and transcript. What relevant preparation and experience (academic, extracurricular or work) do you bring to the program? Don't just describe what you have done. Go beyond and talk about what you gained from these experiences and how this will make you an ideal student for the program.
- Why here: Describe your academic fit for the Fulbright program, and reasons for studying in the U.S.
- Why now: What are your short/long-term goals? How does doing this program, at this time, help you fulfil these? And what will you do with this degree or participation in this scholarship program?
- Now you know what you want to say, consider how you will say it. Keep in mind that the personal statement is a creative writing piece. You will also want to have an introduction, conclusion, and theme connecting your points. Have a look at some online sample personal statements in your field to get a sense of the typical style.
- Write an introduction: You will notice many students start with a personal anecdote or quotation that illustrates their motivation for studying their degree. This shows the reader a bit more about yourself, and can create a theme connecting paragraphs.
- Write a conclusion: Be sure to wrap up your personal statement. What is the main message the reader should take away? Can you connect this back to the theme you introduced in the first paragraph? Try to end on a powerful and positive note.
- Other important rules of thumb to keep in mind when composing your personal statement include:
  - Address the personal statement specifications fully
  - Use clear, concise language – say what you mean
  - Avoid vague or empty statements, clichés and cultural references that may not translate well to a U.S. audience
  - When you re-use a personal statement, be careful to submit the correct personal statement to the correct scholarship and double-check that all references within the text are to the correct scholarship
  - Proofread your work and ask several individuals to proofread your personal statement and offer their feedback (grammar and spelling mistakes will reflect poorly upon your level of effort)
  - Avoid too much overlap with other sections of your application package
  - Address any gaps or weaknesses in your application or academic performance – turn them into a positive if you can

## Recommendations

Three reference letters are required. The reference letter is an extremely important part of your application. It gives the selection committee further insight into getting to know you through the eyes of your professor or employer and plays a big part in the final selection of a candidate.

Reference letters are confidential. Therefore, all applicants **must** register their recommenders so that their recommenders can receive and return the reference via the online system. You will need the name, title and email address of your three referees.

Choose referees who know you well, and whom you have studied or worked with. Visiting Student Researcher (VSR) applicants should include their current PhD supervisor as one of the referees and request that the supervisor's recommendation highlights how this program may benefit the applicant's current PhD studies as well as how meeting the home institution's academic requirements will be managed.

We include guidance on writing a compelling reference at the end of this guide. Diplomatically hand this guide document to your referee with a list of some of your achievements, transcripts, etc. to help jog their memory.

**TIP:** Identify your referees before you start filling out the application form so that they have enough time to submit their reference before the deadline.

## Additional Documents

- Use this section to upload your “Interview Location Page” found at the end of this document.
- If you are applying for a PhD, please upload a writing sample of approximately 10-14 pages, i.e. a section from an article or paper you’ve already written. Although not required of Master’s applicants, it is strongly recommended that you upload a writing sample if you have one available.
- CV
- VSR students who have a letter of invitation from their preferred host institution, should upload this letter as an attachment to their application.
- Be sure to complete the Outreach Survey.

**Fulbright Program email address in South Africa: [fpsa@state.gov](mailto:fpsa@state.gov)**

**[Website](#)**



## FULBRIGHT FOREIGN STUDENT PROGRAM 2023-2024

### INTERVIEW LOCATION PAGE

#### WHERE WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE INTERVIEWED?

You will be responsible for travel and other related expenses.

☐ **Durban**

☐ **Johannesburg**

☐ **Cape Town**

☐ **Pretoria**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPLICATION CHECKLIST

Ensure your application is complete prior to submitting online. Once submitted, an application cannot be edited.

A complete application consists of:

- Application Form
- Study Research Objective
- Personal Statement
- Reference One
- Reference Two
- Reference Three
- Letter of invitation from potential host – for VSR applicants only (not required, but can be included if available)
- Passport Bio page (or ID for now)
- Transcript/s: Grades, certificates and grade explanation sheet
- Curriculum Vitae
- Writing Sample (required for PhD and recommended for MA programs)
- Interview Location Page

Completed applications with all supplemental documents must be submitted through the online system by **May 01, 2022**.

Incomplete applications will not be considered.



## Tips for Writing a Letter of Reference for U.S. Graduate Study

From UC Berkeley website: <https://career.berkeley.edu/Letter/LetterGuidelines>

Indicate how long you have known the applicant and in what capacity. Graduate schools are primarily interested in recommendations that come from professors who know the applicant and his/her academic work as well as from employers. *They are primarily interested in faculty members' summary estimates of the candidate's general promise as a graduate student.* The more the recommendation reflects real knowledge of the applicant and his/her performance, the more useful the letter is to the graduate school admissions committees and thus to the applicant. The letter should address the following questions:

- **Intellectual characteristics:** How do you rate the applicant in overall intelligence? How well does the applicant learn and retain information? What is your assessment of the applicant's skill in analysis and logic? What is the applicant's ability to deal with complex or abstract matters? Does the applicant show evidence of creativity? Has the applicant's academic record been affected by special circumstances such as work, social or academic background?
- **Knowledge of field of study:** What is the applicant's depth and breadth of knowledge in the field? Does he/she know how to use the methods in the field of study or have the experience in research? Where applicable, does the applicant have the requisite laboratory techniques?
- **Ability to communicate:** Is the applicant an effective writer? Does the written work submitted demonstrate a mastery of the convention of English? Is the written material clear, well-organized and forceful? Is the applicant articulate in oral expression?
- **Industry and self-discipline:** To what extent is the applicant persistent, efficient and motivated? Is the applicant able to work independently? Is there any reason to doubt the applicant's commitment to graduate study or diligence as a student?
- **Personal effectiveness:** Does the applicant possess the qualities of maturity and personal adjustment requisite for graduate study? Would you choose the applicant for graduate study under your tutelage? Does the applicant enjoy the trust and respect of fellow students and peers?
- **Potential for graduate study:** What is your prediction of the applicant's probable performance in graduate school? Does he/she have any specialized skill or studies in the field? Does the applicant have an aptitude for the chosen field? How does this applicant rate with other candidates who have been evaluated?

### Additional Tips:

- Include your affiliation/relationship with the student. Were you a supervisor? Adviser? Professor? A professor may see the academic skills, while a supervisor would be able to describe work habits.
- Give honest and factual information and make sure you substantiate your comments with specific examples. Since almost all reference letters are complimentary, it is the details that will give one letter more weight than another in the admissions deliberations.
- Have the student give you his/her transcripts, a list of accomplishments, organizations that he/she belongs to, or any other relevant information.
- Be sure to complete and submit the letter of reference promptly, because the success of the student's application may depend on the punctuality of the recommendation.